SATURDAY NIGHT ON MAIN ST.

Not Main St. in Your Old Home Town; Main St. Here in Sparkling New York; Here Where Folks Can See It if They Can Find It, and the Police Will Let Them Look

By DWIGHT S. PERRIN

MAIN STREET, New York City, on a Saturday night.

Conjures up a picture for the imagination, doesn't it! All right. No harm, generally speaking, in conjuring up a picture for the imagination; it's widely done. But you need to be set right about this one. You ought to see Main Street, New York, on a Saturday night.

You remember Main Street at home. Lively enough it was at any time. But Saturday night! Saturday night was the night of nights. Everybody came down town early and stayed down town late. The sidewalks couldn't hold all the people. Otherwise sedate and sane citizens crossed the street countless times apiece more than was necessary for the sheer exhilaration of being on the other side. There was always something worth while at the Opera House—on Saturday nights. Those who got down early enough enjoyed going to the best hotel (where stage people always stop, provided the best is none too good) and guessing which signature on the hotel register was that of the leading lady—a curiously fascinating pastime until it became generally known that leading ladies' maids never let leading ladies do the registering. The People's Hotel bar, where the bartender, said to have come from Hot Springs, couldn't be stumped with a smart new name for an old cocktail, vied with the soda fountain at Smith's Drug Store as a social centre. All three of the city's barber shops—the leading one and the other two leading ones—were taxed with demands for a quick trim and a once-over, no hot towel, so that the youth of the town might be released for whatever imperative social duty summoned him. Heinie's Cigar Store, where everybody (before the Legislature got fresh) shook dice or played the fortune wheel for cigars, warmed up for an evening of profit and loss. Things, to coin a phrase, fairly hummed.

If that was Main Street at home, what must Main Street, New York City, be like? With the summer visiting season coming on, you really ought to be prepared to answer that question. How would you feel if somebody from home asked to be shown Main Street and you couldn't even find it? Besides, if Main Street, New York City, gets into the war news (as it has already threatened to do) you'll feel more at home to know what you're reading about.

Main Street, New York City, it is only fair to say, is in Brooklyn. But Brooklyn, anybody will tell you, became a part of New York City early last fall, when its National League baseball team got into (and barely got out of) a world's series with the Boston Red Sox. Whether it is to remain so depends somewhat upon the performance of the Flatbush players in the season just to hand.

I have lived in New York for some time, but am a stranger in Brooklyn; so when it fell to my lot to write a piece about Main Street I had to confess I'd never heard of it. I was ashamed of my ignorance, but I needn't have been. Neither, it seemed, had anybody else, except the man who thought up the idea for the piece.

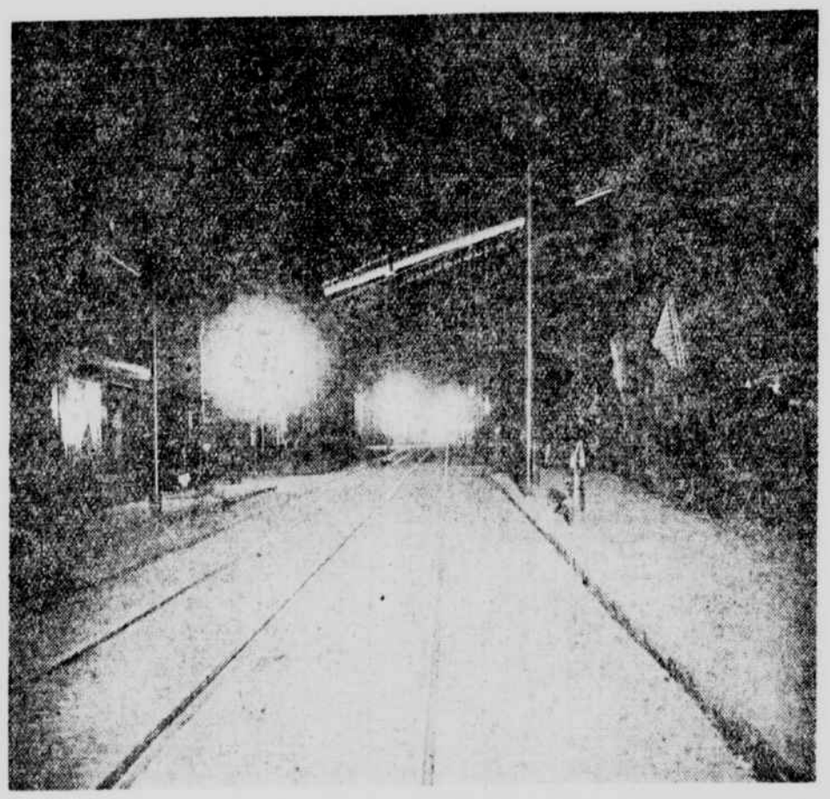
"Just take a Bridge car," he said with an indefinite wave of the hand. "That'll take you there."

Instinctively I knew he meant Brooklyn Bridge.

I asked a B. R. T. inspector the way to a Bridge car and he knew right off. Then I tried him on Main Street, and he seemed to know. He murmured something about Sands Street, Prospect Avenue and other points of interest. He might as well have talked about the Somme and the Marne. But I made the Bridge car with never a mistake, and was fortunate in finding a conductor who knew right where Main Street was and didn't hesitate to say so.

"Folly the elevated until it turns to the left," he said. "That'll be Main Street."

I "follied" the elevated as best I could and when I concluded it had turned to the left all it was going to, struck off into what I thought ought to be Main Street. Before I had traversed a block I knew it couldn't be. There never was such a Main Street. I appealed to a policeman, standing in the shadow of one of the great bridge piers. (Still Brooklyn Bridge, if you're lost.)



Brown Bros. Photo.

There It Was; Main Street. And This Was Saturday Night

It was thirty seconds before he answered my timid question. In that space of time he looked at me twice, moved his revolver hand from his cap to his belt line, peered into the darkness behind him and coughed loud enough to be heard four blocks.

"Where is what?" he repeated scornfully.

"Main Street," I insisted apologetically.

"Right here," he shouted in a tone that seemed to say, "Whatnell do you care, anyway?"

There it was. It lay before me—Main Street, New York City. And this was Saturday night!

Main Street, New York City, is four blocks long. It is about as much like Main Street at home as Broadway at home is like Broadway, New York City. It starts at one of the bridge piers and runs slantwise into the East River. I walked the length of the south side of it (or what I took to be the south side) and arrived at its furthermost end at twenty minutes of nine. On the way I passed four people. Two of them were two more policemen.

From the end of Main Street, New York City, I undertook to survey that portion of the river not hidden by what is left of the old Catharine ferry slip. Presently I became uncomfortably conscious that some one was looking at me. It was the watchman in a factory shack on the river front. The solitary arc light at the end of the street shed its rays equally on him and on me. I could see he thought I was a German spy who had missed his way to the navy yard, so I stared back at him and reached for my hip pocket, as if to produce a bomb. That had the desired effect. He ceased looking at me.

Main Street, New York City, has four arc lights. The one on the river front reveals the watchman and the old ferry slip; the one at Front Street a disreputable wooden building, housing a brightly lighted saloon; the one at York Street, a few more disreputable wooden buildings, housing a few more brightly lighted saloons, and the one at Prospect Avenue, part of the bridge pier and the nervous policeman.

All of the life, as you might say, is centred in the block between Front and York Streets. On the north side, from Front to York, one comes in turn upon a saloon, a grocery store, the street's only barber shop—curiously called a tonsorial parlor—a general store, another general store, a drug store, a grocery store, a saloon and a grocery store. On the opposite, sometimes called the south, side are a bake shop, a fruit store, a tailor shop, a fruit store and a grocery store.

There was nobody in the stores, but there was life in the streets, and it was visible. Beneath a clothesline stretched across the street and adorned with an American flag and an Italian flag a military drill was in progress. The army consisted of one boy, very small and very Italian, and another boy, also small and also Italian. The second was instructing the first in the mysteries of the manual of arms and marching formations. I gathered on the curb and impersonated a crowd.

In addition to its arc lights Main Street, New York City, has a policeman for every corner in these warlike times. An unfortunate photographer who undertook to explode a few flashlights that the picture story of Main Street might be handed down to posterity, was surrounded by all four of the busy blue coats before the smoke of the first flash had cleared away. No explanation would do. He had to go to the station. Nobody was going to make a disturbance on Main Street, New York City, and get away with it!

Two tired looking car tracks adorn Main Street. No cars passed while I was there to see, so I asked a policeman where the tie-up was. He said a car ran over the tracks only once a day, at ten minutes of six every evening, to hold the franchise for the B. R. T. It might be valuable some day, I thought, if anybody wanted to build a munitions factory or something at the foot of the street. Once in a while a car used to run to the river front, to the Fulton ferry, the only one left, still running at 9 o'clock in the evening, and it seemed hardly worth while as a regular thing.

There is something worth seeing on Main Street, one policeman assured me, if you want to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to see it.

"Me and Connors stood right here where you and me are standing last Friday morning and counted the people goin' into that saloon over there," he said. "How many you think went in between 5 an' 6 o'clock?"

I couldn't guess.

"Six hundred," he said proudly. "Yes, sir, six hundred went in. That's a two-for-one place, you know, and all the bums have to get in before 6, when the two-for-one stops."

Polite and guarded inquiry into the nature of a "two-for-one place" revealed that the "house" furnishes a drink for every one the customer buys.

I knew then that this couldn't be a regular Main Street, and had turned sadly to go when my eye caught an object that promised to make my visit worth while. Seated on a bread box in front of a grocery store was an aged man. He was whittling.

"Ah," I breathed, "the oldest inhabitant! Perhaps he will spin me a yarn worth while about Main Street."

I spoke to him.

"Italiano," he muttered.

I passed on into the dark.

ENGLAND'S PROBLEM NOW OURS

We Are Familiar with the Phrase, "Our Friends, the Enemy," but Suppose It Should Be Reversed; Suppose It Should Suddenly Become, "The Enemy Our Friends"

This article is not an assembling of scrapbook data, of concentrated clippings. The author, an American woman, was in Europe at the outbreak of the war, and while her facts are necessarily a matter of record, her account of England's awakening to the menace of alien mischief is based upon her own day-to-day observations in a troubled time

EVERY American with whom I have talked looks at war with Germany from the impersonal standpoint of the Englishman at the beginning of the European war, something that it was up to his government to handle. The thousands who stood tense and breathless before Buckingham Palace awaiting the stroke of "Big Ben" which would mean war with Germany looked upon war as a task for armies and fleets, something to be fought out in the North Sea, Belgium or "somewhere in France"; something that would not come home to themselves personally, something not directly affecting the everyday man in his everyday business. Spies? Certainly, there might be a few, but they could be left to the police and the war department. Spies were people interested in obtaining military information—nothing to do with the everyday folks.

Apparently, the police and the war department considered it in much the same light, this dealing with spies. There were certain persons who were suspects and were under more or less close surveillance. These would have to be taken into custody in case of war—merely a matter of hundreds. A certain number of hours were to be allowed those who wished to leave the country with the diplomatic and consular officials, and it was assumed that most of the Germans would take advantage of this opportunity to leave.

However, when the German Ambassador, with his staff and the German consuls, left England with all that cared to accompany them, the British public awoke to the fact that there remained in England many thousands of Germans. War with Germany did not mean the North Sea or "somewhere in France"; it meant war with the German next door, the barber on the corner, the waiter in the restaurant where one dined every day, the shop where one bought provisions, the head of the bank that handled the family funds. Germans were so woven into the fabric of the daily life of England that seemingly it meant almost the destruction of certain parts of the fabric to eliminate them, the breaking up of families and the disruption of business houses.

There are some situations that treaties and governments cannot provide against, and here was one. An agreement between the nations allowing Germans nine months or any other specific length of time to settle their affairs would have been worth even less than the average treaty to which Germany is a party. Overnight there appeared in shops, hotels, restaurants and business houses the sign, "NO ALIEN ENEMIES EMPLOYED HERE." There were anti-German riots in the poorer districts of the cities; shops bearing German names were demolished. No one would trade with any concern that employed Germans, no one would remain in lodging and boarding houses sheltering Germans, landlords refused to rent property to Germans, and to speak German on the street meant being reported to the nearest policeman as a suspected spy. It was found that a spy did not necessarily mean a military spy. Germany had commercial spies in England, as in every other country, men receiving small allowances from the home govern so that they might work for lower wages and secure positions in leading business houses, factories and other important commercial institutions. Their work was to secure information that might be of value in Germany, trade secrets of all kinds, lists of customers in foreign countries, prices and processes. Naturalization did not mean a real change of allegiance; it was found that once a German always a German. An English statesman declared that "every German is a potential spy," and England went spy crazy, with more or less reason.

Of the thousands who remained in England there were many who stayed because they preferred taking the chance of internment in England rather than the chance of a trench in Germany. Many thought that the war would be only a matter of months, even weeks, when England would be conquered by the Fatherland. Not a few who spoke English well took advantage of the confusion and joined the thousands of American refugees. It was not difficult to answer perfunctory questions and get in return a paper that permitted sailing to America or remaining in England as an American, only to be executed as a spy eventually.

After the original suspects had been interned, however, and those who could had left the country, the British officials were confronted with a situation which was totally unforeseen and for which no provision had been made. There were thousands of Germans scattered over the British Isles who must be put on record, classified and individually dealt with. Many were without shelter, and, being thrown out of employment at a moment's notice, were without funds to buy food.

There were two classes of prisoners to be dealt with in numbers. The soldiers taken in the fighting could be put to work on railways and roads and made self-supporting, but the civil prisoner had certain rights and privileges that had to be considered. He could not be forced to work, but if he did work the money he earned must be held for him until the end of the war or given to him to spend for luxuries during his internment. Once interned, the government must provide him with food and shelter. Naturally, England wanted no more of these non-producers to support in war time than was absolutely necessary, yet here was an army of unemployed who were not only a menace to the country, but were themselves in danger of the over-zealous patriot who might start something in a crowd.

This army of Germans was the problem confronting England at the beginning of the war, and this is how it was handled. A sort of "clearing house" was established at Olympia, the Madison Square Garden of London. Here men were interned temporarily while under investigation. Those who were over military age or declared unfit for military service—I was told that jumping up and down for an hour or two daily would shortly produce a "heart trouble" that would last two or three days and get by any doctor—were allowed to return to Germany. Any one with the necessary funds and the remotest excuse was allowed to leave for the United States, until the United States objected. Men who had married English women were allowed to remain with their families, but were restricted to a four-mile area, reporting to the police once a week or oftener, according to conditions and locality. The rest were sent to hastily established "concentration camps."

A "camp" was almost any place where several hundred men could be kept under guard. These men were not criminals, and could not be sent to the ordinary prisons, where they would be forced to undergo corrective imprisonment and associate with criminals. Even a certain amount of consideration must be shown the social standing of the war prisoner. The banker and the day laborer both objected if put into the same camp; therefore, the banker and other business men were interned on the big liners, such as the Saxonia and others, temporarily out of commission and anchored at the mouth of the Thames and elsewhere. Several thousand from the working classes were sent to what had been the summer training camp of a part of Kitchener's army. For most there were discomforts and privations which could not be avoided in those early days.

Gradually order came out of chaos; a sort of court was established where protests against internment, appeals for permits to leave the country, and so forth, were decided. A committee for the welfare of alien enemies (women and children) was formed, a bureau where a record of all Germans, their place of residence or internment, was organized, and sanitary camps were established, where life went on in a healthy if monotonous routine.

It took England two years to solve her problem of alien enemies—if, indeed, it is solved even yet. Germany and France, confronted by a similar problem, took the bull by the horns, the police system of both countries giving them a fairly complete knowledge of the alien enemies within their borders. In all countries a certain number of hours was allowed in which to leave. This time having elapsed, all alien enemies were rounded up by the police and shut up together in any convenient place. Men, women and children, without regard to age, sex or physical condition, were herded together in vacant hotels, barns, anywhere; in Russia even empty freight cars were used. In health resorts in Germany, such as Bad Nauheim and Homburg, the aliens were ordered to be at the railway stations with all their baggage at a certain hour; then, when they were there all ready and expecting to leave, they were locked up in deserted hotels or other vacant buildings, even the local prison, instead of being given the permit to leave that they had been led to expect.

Having taken all enemy aliens into custody, the German officials commenced a systematic weeding out; women and children were released, and on two days each week train accommodation was provided for a specified number to leave for Holland or Switzerland. Men who were over military age or unfit for service were also allowed to leave if they had no civil or military title. But woe betide the man whose vanity had induced him to add some courtesy title to his name! A man of seventy, deaf and nearly blind, was held because some fifty years before he had been colonel in some show regiment. However, after the adjustment of matters things were not so difficult; those who had money to pay for accommodation were allowed sufficient liberty to spend it. In some places women and children remained behind because the husband and father could not leave; those who did were not interned, but were required to report daily, or in some cases twice daily, to the local police. Even Germany, which in other respects was prepared for war like a very complete and perfect machine, with every part oiled and ready to move when the Kaiser pressed the button—even Germany did not have adequate provision for the innocent alien enemies within her borders. For England and Austria, be it said that no women and children have ever been interned even for a day.

Gradually all the countries at war have adopted a similar system of taking care of the interned civilians, the camps being similar to those of the military detention camps. The biggest camp in Germany, just outside Berlin, is in essentials arranged like the big civilian camp at Knockaloe, in the Isle of Man, or the military camp in Austria, where there are 60,000 Russian soldiers. It is in this same camp near Berlin that all Americans remaining will be interned if war is declared, for it is a foregone conclusion that Americans will be interned, since Germany has now interned practically every male citizen of an enemy nation still in the country.

In times of peace this camp is a racetrack. Being surrounded by a high fence, it is like a walled town of the olden time, the difference being that the old towns had walls to keep the enemy out, and in this the wall is to keep the enemy in. Men who have money are allowed to draw a specified sum weekly, which can be spent for "luxuries" at the camp canteen. At first German prisoners in England were permitted to receive sausages and other dainties from Germany, but since the censor discovered that a sausage or a cigar might easily be used to cover uncensored mail, that even the kernels of an English walnut might be removed and letters substituted, the shell looking perfectly innocent, certain restrictions have been put on what a prisoner may receive from home.

Owing to differing conditions in the two countries, and particularly when the food shortage in Germany became serious, the German government allowed interned British subjects to receive supplies of food and other necessities regularly from England by parcel post through Holland. Probably a similar arrangement would be made regarding Americans if any were interned in Germany. Committees would be formed in Holland and Switzerland to care for the matter, and food would be sent regularly.

To intern and feed even one-tenth of the Germans in the United States would be a serious matter with food at the present prices. But it is a problem in England, where the number of Germans is comparatively small, and where even the war prices do not bring the cost of living up to the American prices, what would it be here? Not only is there the question of providing for the German of military age (military age in Germany being at the present time from fifteen to eighty-five), but his family must be taken care of. The German government makes a certain allowance, a few marks a week, for the support of those who are destitute and cannot leave the country, but this allowance is usually insufficient, and food and shelter must be provided by some one.

Should war with the Central Powers be declared, Austria should be considered independently of Germany. In no one of the other big countries has such toleration and courtesy been shown toward an alien enemy. The Austrian and Hungarian characters differ entirely from the Prussian; neither the Austrian nor the Hungarian has active personal enmity toward any one. At no time have enemy aliens been interned in these countries except for obvious reason in the individual case. English gentlemen go about in Budapest and Vienna unmolested; the English business houses in Vienna have continued business without interruption and without great loss of patronage. To speak English in the streetcars or shops does not invoke insult. There are some minor restrictions in Vienna—the Englishman is *supposed* to be at home by 10 p. m., and he is forbidden certain cafés frequented by Austrian and German officers. In other popular cafés the orchestra plays a parody on "Tipperary," and if English and Americans sing the English words it is taken as a joke by the crowd. To be sure, there are in all the shop windows the "Gott strafe England" and the enamel sinking of the Lusitania brooches, but one seldom sees them worn.

So far as the Americans in Austria are concerned, there is not only the toleration of the Austrians to be considered, but also a genuine friendliness, because of the almost unlimited generosity of Ambassador and Mrs. Penfield and the personal work that they, as well as other Americans in Vienna, have done for the Austrian Red Cross and the poor of Vienna and Budapest.